

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-13 are pending in the application, Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-12 amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; Claims 1, 7 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishikawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,697,622, hereinafter Ishikawa); and Claims 2-6 and 8-12 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter.

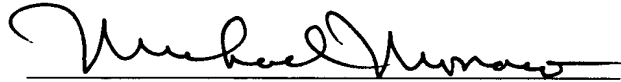
Claims 1, 3, 5, 7-12 are amended in response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and to correct typographical errors noted by Applicants. No new matter is added.

Applicants traverse the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Ishikawa. Ishikawa was published February 24, 2004, which is after Applicants' priority date of October 19, 2000. Thus, Ishikawa may only be valid as a reference under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). Because Ishikawa and the present application, at the time the inventions were made, were commonly assigned, Applicants request the rejection be withdrawn in view of the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103(c).

Accordingly, in view of the present amendment and in light of the previous discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests and early and favorable action to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Bradley D. Lytle
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 40,073

Michael Monaco
Registration No. 52,041

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

GJM:MM\la

I:\ATTY\MM\AMENDMENT\226094\215255US-AM.DOC